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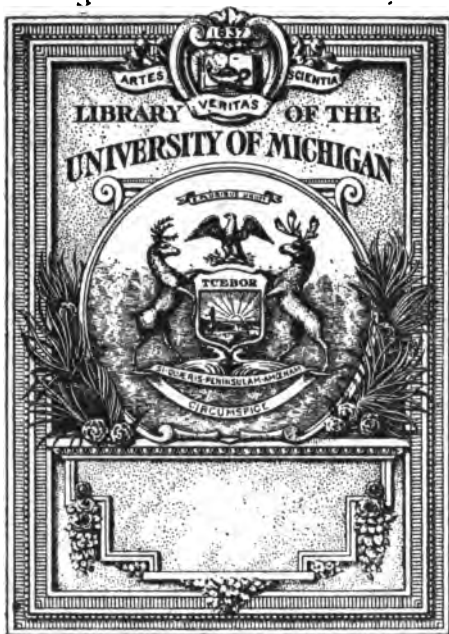
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# THE SECRET

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*THE SECRET:  
SIXTY POEMS  
BY LAURENCE  
BINYON*



*LONDON  
ELKIN MATHEWS, CORK STREET  
MCMXX*



DEDICATED  
TO  
HENRY NEWBOLT



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I

THE SECRET

I

I LAY upon my bed in the great night :  
The sense of my body drowsed ;  
But a clearness yet lingered in the spirit,  
By soft obscurity housed.

As an inn to a traveller on a long road,  
Happy sleep appeared.  
I should come there, to the room of waiting dreams,  
In the time that slowly neared ;

But still amid memory's wane fancy delighted,  
Like wings in the afterglow  
Dipping to the freshness of the waves of living,  
To recover from long-ago

A touch or a voice, then soaring aloft and afar  
The free world to range.  
At last, on the brink of the dark, by subtle degrees  
Came a chilling and a change.

Solitude sank to my marrow and pierced my veins.  
Though I roam and though I learn  
All the wonder of earth and of men, it is here;  
In the end I must return,

To the something alone that in each of us breathes  
and sleeps,  
Profound, isolate, still,  
And must brave the giant world, and from hour to  
hour  
Must prove its own will ;

To this self, unexcused and unglorified, drawn  
From its fond shadows, and bare,  
Wherein no man that has been, none that is or shall  
be,  
Shares, or can ever share.

And it tingled through me how all use and disguise  
Hide nothing : none  
Avails to shield, neither pleader nor protector,  
But the truth of myself alone.

And the days that have made me, have I not made  
them also ?  
Are they not drops of my blood ?  
What have I done with them ? Flower they still  
within me,  
Or lie, trodden in the mud ?

Why for god-like freedom an irreplaceable Here,  
An irrevocable Now ?  
They were heavy like strong chains about my bosom,  
Like hard bonds upon my brow.

The moments oozing out of the silence seemed  
From my very heart lost  
In the stream of the worlds : I felt them hot like tears  
And of more than riches' cost.

Yet what was it alien in me stood and rebelled  
And cried, Nevertheless  
My passion is mine, my strength and my frailty ; I  
am not  
Thrall unto Time's duress !

Then suddenly rose before me, older than all,  
Night of the soft speech,  
With murmur of tender winds, yet terrible with stars  
Beyond fancy's reach ;

Without foundation, without summit, without  
Haven or refuge, Night  
Palpitating with stars that dizzy thought and desire  
In their unimagined flight,

O these most terrible ! vast surmises, touching  
The pulse of a fear unknown,  
Where all experience breaks like a frail bubble,  
And the soul is left alone,

Alone and abandoned of all familiar uses,—  
Itself the only place  
It knows,—a question winged, barbed and burning  
In the answerless frost of Space.

I was afraid ; but my heart throbbed faster, fiercer.  
I trembled, but cried anew :  
I am strange to you, O Stars ! O Night, I am your  
exile,  
I have no portion in you.

Though you shall array your silences against me,  
I know you and defy.  
Though I be but a moth in an abyss of ages, : :  
This at least is not yours ; it is I.



## II

O blessèd be the touch of thought  
 That marries moments from afar,  
 That finds the thing it had not sought,  
 And smells a spice no treasure bought,  
 And learns what never sages taught,  
 And sees this earth a dazzling star !

As in the sheen of a lamp unseen,  
 The lamp of memory shrouded long,  
 There sprang before me, sweet as song,  
 The vision of a branch of bloom,  
 A swaying branch of blossom scented ;  
 And in that bloom amid the gloom  
 My heart was luminously tented.

## III

A score of years was melted, and I was young  
 And the world young with me,  
 When in innocence of delight I laid me down  
 Beneath a certain tree.

The breathing splendour of that remembered May  
 Had yet seven days to spill  
 In fragrant showers of fairy white and red  
 And in notes from the blackbird's bill,

When I laid me down on a bank by the water's  
 edge :  
 In the glowing shadow I lay.  
 My very body was drenched in a speechless joy  
 Whose cause I could not say.

The sky was poured in singing rivers of blue ;  
The ripple danced in sight ;  
Close to the marge was a coloured pebble ; it burned  
Amid kisses of liquid light.

Like a hurry of little flames the tremble of gleams  
Shivered up through the leaves and was gone.  
Like a shaking of heavenly bells was the sound of the  
leaves  
In the tower of branches blown.

And odours wandering each from its honeyed haunt  
Over the air stole,  
Like memories out of a world before the world,  
Seeking the private soul.

But I knew not where my soul was : in that hour  
Neither time nor place it knew !  
It was trembling high in the topmost blossom that  
drank  
Of the glory of airy blue ;

It was dark in the root that sucked of the plenteous  
earth ;  
It was lovely flames of fire ;  
It was water that murmured round and around the  
world ;  
It was poured in the sun's desire.

Not the bird, but the bird's bright, wayward swift-  
ness ;  
Not the flowers in magic throng,  
But the shooting, the breathing and the perfumed  
breaking ;  
Not the singer it was, but the song.

I touched the flesh of my body, and it was strange.  
It seemed that my spirit knew  
It was I no more ; yet the earth and the sky answered  
And cried aloud, It is you !

Then into my blood the word of my being thrilled,  
(Not a nerve but aware)—It is I !  
Yet I could not tell my thought from the green of the  
grass,  
My bliss from the blue of the sky.

Overbrimmed, overflowing, I rose like one who has  
drunk  
Of a radiance keener than wine.  
I stood on the marvellous earth, and felt my blood  
As the stream of a power divine.

Laughter of children afar on the air came to me  
And touched me softly home.  
There were tears in me like trembling dew ; I knew  
not  
Where they had stolen from.

Who is not my brother, and who is not my sister ?  
O wonder of human eyes,  
Have I passed you by, nor perceived how luminous  
in you  
All infinity lies ?

Love opened my eyes and opened my ears ; not one,  
But his soul is as mine is to me !  
I heard like a ripple around the world breaking  
The voices of children in glee ;

I saw the beauty, secret as starlit wells,  
Treasured in the bosoms of the old.

I heard like the whisper of leaf to leaf in the night-wind  
Hopes that the tongue never told.

Was it the grass that quivered about me? I felt  
Not that, but the hearts beating  
Close to my own, unnumbered as blades of the grass,  
And the dead in the quick heart meeting;

And I knew the dreams of wandering sorrow and joy  
Breathed in the sleep of the night  
From the other side of the earth, that for me was  
glowing  
To the round horizon's light;

The earth that moves through the light and the dark  
for ever,  
As a dancer moves among  
The maze of her sister stars, with a silent speed  
In a dance that is always young:

And the heart of my body knew that it shared in all;  
It was there, not alone nor afraid.  
It throbbed in the life that can never be destroyed,  
In the things Time never made.

## II

FOR Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,  
There is no measure upon earth.  
Nay, they wither, root and stem,  
If an end be set to them.

Overbrim and overflow  
If your own heart you would know.  
For the spirit, born to bless,  
Lives but in its own excess. ✓

### III

**N**AKED night ; black elms, pallid and stream-  
ing sky !

Alone with the passion of the Wind,  
In a hollow of stormy sound lost and alone am I,  
On beaten earth a lost, unmated mind,  
Marvelling at the stars, few, strange, and bright,  
That all this dark assault of surging air,  
Wrenching the rooted wood, hunting the cloud of night,  
As if it would tear all and nothing spare,  
Leaves supreme in the height.

Against what laws, what laws, what powers invisible,  
Unthought yet always found,  
Cries this dumb passion, strains this wrestle of wild  
will,

With tiger-leaps that seem to shake the ground ?  
Is it the baffled, homeless, rebel wind's crying  
Or storm from a profounder passion wrung ?  
Ah, heart of man, is it you, the old powers defying,  
By far desires and terrible beauty stung,  
Broken on laws unseen, in a starry world dying  
Ignorant, tameless, young ?

### IV

#### SURRENDER

**P**ALE was the early day,  
Fog-white the winter air,  
When up a hill-side bare,  
Roughened with rimy grass,  
I took my thoughtless way:

As my feet strayed uphill  
I felt the blank cloud float  
Past, and bedew my coat.  
At unawares I found  
A gate, and there stood still.

And on a sudden behold,  
Above, the virgin blue.  
Blue, bathing my heart through !  
A shock of blueness bright  
Pierced with an eye of gold.

And there uprising tall  
From mist to warm sapphire,  
Straight up like windless fire,  
A poplar stood alone,  
White, dream-fresh, virginal.

Rime robed her, pure as snow.  
O white was never white  
As this which thrilled my sight.  
I stood still in the mist,  
Dazzled, entranced, aglow.

For in a dazzling drift  
The rime rained down, it gleamed,  
It shivered soft, it streamed,  
Radiant as tears of joy  
When the heart gives all its gift.

Alone in the still, still air  
To the divine lone height  
Of blue this poplar white  
Like virgin ecstasy  
Stript all her beauty bare.

## V

**N**OTHING is enough !  
 No, though our all be spent—  
 Heart's extremest love,  
 Spirit's whole intent,  
 All that nerve can feel,  
 All that brain invent,—  
 Still beyond appeal  
 Will Divine Desire  
 Yet more excellent  
 Precious cost require  
 Of this mortal stuff,—  
 Never be content  
 Till ourselves be fire.  
 Nothing is enough !

## VI

**I** THINK of a flower that no eye ever has seen,  
 That springs in a solitary air.  
 Is it no one's joy ? It is beautiful as a queen  
 Without a kingdom's care.

We have built houses for Beauty, and costly shrines,  
 And a throne in all men's view :  
 But she was far on a hill where the morning shines  
 And her steps were lost in the dew.

## VII

### PAIN

**F**IND me out a fortress, find  
Such a mind within the mind  
As can gather to its source  
All of life's inveterate force,  
Find the hard and secret cell  
In my body's citadel,  
Iron-ribbed from suck and drain  
Of the clutching monster, Pain—  
Pain, the formless alien will  
That seeks me out, that strives to drill  
Through shielding thought and barricade  
Of all the strength my will has made ;  
That singles me and searches through  
The sharp sense I am narrowed to ;  
And ever as the bond I strain  
Thrusts me home to flesh again,  
Estranging me from earth, to be  
One fierce throb of identity !  
Yet there's fibre in the mind  
I shall find, I shall find,  
To resist and to defy  
All the world that is not I.

## VIII

**T**REES are for lovers.  
A spirit has led them  
Where the young boughs meet  
And the green light hovers,  
And shadowy winds blow sweet.



Trees spring to heaven !  
So their hearts would spring,  
So would they outpour  
All the heart discovers  
Of its own wild treasure  
Into speech, and sing  
Like the tree from its core  
Sweet words beyond measure  
Like leaves in the sun  
Dancing every one  
And weaving a fairy  
Cave of quivering rays  
And of shadows starry  
Where those lovers, drowned  
Each in the other's gaze,  
Lose all time, abound  
In their perfect giving ;  
Give and never tire  
Of their fulness, still  
In the fresh leaves living  
One full song unsated  
Of the flower Desire  
And Delight the fruit ;  
Love, that's mated.

## IX

### THE MEETING

**F**ACES of blank decorum, and bald heads  
And the drone of a voice saying what none  
denies ;

Words like cobwebs, scarcely stirred by a breath,  
Loosely hanging, grey in an unswept corner,

Thoughts belonging to nobody, like old coats  
Cheaply borrowed out of a dead man's wardrobe.

Over his spectacles looks the Chairman, blandly  
Solemn, exacting attention, nodding approval.

I look on the floor and ponder the shaven planks,—  
Tall trees once, tossing aloft in the wild air ;

I watch the sun that falls upon oaken carvings,  
A gentle beam from millions of miles away :

Hands and a chisel carved them,—at night the lips  
Of the carver blew the dust from his work and smiled.

The chairs, so silent under the ponderous flesh,—  
Pleasure shaped them out of a brain's designing.

The brass of the chandelier, the molten metal  
Streamed in the mould, conspired to friendly uses.

I feel the spring of the trees and their old rejoicing,  
The touch of the warmth of hands that felt for beauty.

Near and neighbourly are those shapes about me,  
Taking the light sweetly and saying nothing.

Why is a voice, the only human assertion,  
Farther away than the suns of the astronomers ?

## X

**F**ROM the howl of the wind  
As I opened the door  
And entered, the firelight  
Was soft on the floor.

Mute each in their places  
Were table and chair,  
The white wall, the shadows,  
Awaiting me there.

All was strange on a sudden !  
From the stillness a spell,  
A fear or a fancy,  
Across my heart fell.

Were they waiting another  
To sit by the hearth ?  
Was it I saw them newly,  
A stranger on earth ?

## XI

### THE AUGUST WEEDS

**I** WANDERED between woods  
On a grassy down, when still  
Clouds hung after rain  
Over hollow and hill ;

The blossom-time was over,  
The singing throats dumb,  
And the year's coloured ripeness  
Not yet come.

And all at unawares,  
Surprising the stray sight,  
Ran straight into my heart  
Like a beam, delight.

Negligent weeds ravelled  
The green edge of the copse,  
Whitely, dimly, sparkling  
With a million drops.

And sudden fancy feigned  
What strange beauty would pass  
Did but a shiver of wind  
Tremble through the grass,

Shaking the poised, round drops  
Spilled and softly rolled  
A-glitter from the ragwort's  
Roughened gold ;

From the rusted scarlet  
Of tall sorrel seed,  
And fretted tufts, frost-grey,  
Of the silver-weed,

And from purple-downed thistle  
Towering dewy over  
Yellow-cupped spurge  
And the drenched, sweet clover.

But all were motionless :  
Not one breath shed  
Those little pale pearls  
That an elf might thread

Under a fading moon  
By an old thorn-tree  
For the witching throat  
Of Nimuē.

## XII

THINKING of shores that I shall never see,  
And things that I would know but am forbid  
By Time and briefness, treasures locked from me  
In unknown tongue or human bosom hid,

Knowing how unsure is all my knowledge, doled  
To sloven memory and to cheated sense,  
And to what majesty of stars I hold  
My little candle of experience

In the vast night, in the untravelled night,  
I sigh and seek. And there is answer none  
But in the silence that sure pressure slight  
Of your heart beating close beside my own.

O Love, Love, where in you is any bound?  
Fool I to seek, who have infinitely found.

## XIII

THE rain was ending, and light  
Lifting the leaden skies.  
It shone upon ceiling and floor  
And dazzled a child's eyes.

Pale after fever, a captive  
Apart from his schoolfellows,  
He stood at the high room's window  
With face to the pane pressed close,

And beheld an immense glory  
Flooding with fire the drops  
Spilled on miraculous leaves  
Of the fresh green lime-tree tops.

Washed gravel glittered red  
To a wall, and beyond it nine  
Tall limes in the old inn yard  
Rose over the tall inn sign.

And voices arose from beneath  
Of boys from school set free,  
Racing and chasing each other  
With laughter and games and glee.

To the boy at the high room-window,  
Gazing alone and apart,  
There came a wish without reason,  
A thought that shone through his heart.

I'll choose this moment and keep it,  
He said to himself, for a vow,  
To remember for ever and ever  
As if it were always now.

#### XIV

ANGERED Reason walked with me  
A street so squat, unshapen, bald,  
So blar-windowed and grimy-walled,  
So dismal-doored, it seemed to be

The abortion of a mind that had  
Nor wit nor will to make, but left  
Its impotence in image, reft  
Of even the means of seeming glad.

And there, like never-ripened fruit,  
Unsunned and starved, were human lives  
In joyless, neighbour-dreading hives  
Of care, with half their senses mute.

It pressed on me, that patient street,  
It hurt me that it housed my kind :  
It was so abject and resigned  
And so deformed, I hated it.

The stars that flowered above grew bright ;  
The evening filled with wondrous blue ;  
The lampshine glistened in the dew ;  
The gliding trams were ships of light.

And through my rebel heart there ran  
The want of things not bought or sold ;  
The spirit free to make and mould ;  
The naked glory of a man.

And fevered I began to build  
A city, like the body, worth  
The natural happiness of earth,  
And with this folk its streets I filled,

No more from widest joy exiled  
Nor helpless in a caging net.  
Suddenly by a lamp I met  
A woman carrying her child.

I stopped the building of my dream :  
For there was all the future's book  
Written in that enfolding look,  
And there the never-ending theme,

And there the builder of the strong  
City of men's desire ; but there  
Also the shadow of the snare  
And the corruption and the wrong.

Ah, now I doubted of my thought  
That could so easily perfect  
Wishes in dream, and raise the wrecked,  
And make all noble as it wrought.

Those mother's eyes, absorbed, unknown,  
Had made my vision wan and thin.  
There was a harder world to win  
From flesh and blood than wood and stone.

O now of those, life's prisoners, none,  
Soiled, soured, or hardened, but had speech  
To me of secret wonder ; each  
Was once so wonderful to one !

Yet she that bears the pang, and hears  
The first young cry and stills its want,  
And can with her vast hope enchant  
The promise of betraying years,—



Who should have beauty's best but she  
To whom a son is given? That street  
Of life's denial and defeat  
Stood in my mind, accusing me.

## XV

### THE THINGS THAT GROW

IT was nothing but a little neglected garden,  
Laurel-screened, and hushed in a hot stillness;  
An old pear-tree, and flowers mingled with weeds.  
Yet as I came to it all unawares, it seemed  
Charged with mystery; and I stopped, intruding,  
Fearful of hurting that so absorbed stillness.  
For I was tingling with the wind's salty splendour,  
And still my senses moved with the keel's buoyance  
Out on the water, where strong light was shivered  
Into a dance dazzling as drops of flame.  
The rocking radiance and the winged sail's lifting  
And the noise of the rush of the water left behind  
Sang to my body of movement, victory, joy.  
But here the light was asleep, and green, green  
In a veined leaf it glowed among the shadows.  
A hollyhock rose to the sun and bathed its flowers  
Luminously clustered in the unmoving air;  
A butterfly lazily winked its gorgeous wings;  
Marigolds burned intently amid the grass;  
The ripening pears hung each with a rounded shadow:  
All beyond was drowned in the indolent blueness,  
And at my feet, like a word of an unknown tongue,  
Was the midnight-dark bloom of the delicate pansy.  
Suddenly these things awed my heart, as if here  
In perishing blossom and springing shoot were a power  
Greater than shipwrecking winds and all wild waters.

## XVI

THE night wind over the great downs  
Streams along the sky.  
In the solitude of the hill-side  
There is only you and I.

The night wind leaps and rushes  
Black in the trees that cry  
As if their travail echoed  
The world's eternal *why?* ✓

Clouds have buried the old moon.  
The sunk light cowers shy.  
In a world of stumbling and darkness  
There is only you and I.

## XVII

I AM weary of doing and dating  
The day with the thing to be done,  
This painful self translating  
To a language not my own.

Give me to fashion a thing ;  
Give me to shape and to mould ;  
I have found out the song I can sing,  
I am happy, delivered, and bold.

## XVIII

### THE BATHER

**W**ATER, frolic water !  
Drops in the dazzle of noon, drops divinely  
cold,  
Radiant down naked breast, down arm and thigh  
You run to my feet, shaken to shining grass,  
Betwixt the green blades, liquid gems, you lie.  
Water, careless water !  
Little miraculous mirrors  
Globing the glory of earth and sky,  
Lazy drops, vanishing in the sun's hot kisses,  
Drops caressingly rolled,  
You glide and suddenly fall like a falling star,  
Like a throb of delight you die.  
The pool beneath me glows  
In its own gloom asleep,  
Water, secret water !  
But all its quivering sparkles, a fairy mesh,  
Are showered about my sun-delighted flesh.  
And I wonder at the beauty of water,  
Simple and swift and shy,  
A slumber and escape,  
Anywhither yielding,  
A never-recovered shape,  
Laughter and loss in an instant's gleam to the eye !  
Water, vivid water !  
I feel the cool drops run  
Down me in the sun ;  
And suddenly thrilling near  
In the stillness of noon is a vision of water swung  
In waves heavy and huge  
Out of a chaos shaped into shapes of fear

Heedless of human cry,  
Drowning, ruining, endlessly crashed and returning,—  
A power, a terror ! O cold, dancing drops,  
Is it the kiss of a danger in delight  
That makes you glow on the body of a man  
And the heart of a man reply ?

## XIX

**I**N the shadow of a broken house,  
Down a deserted street,  
Propt walls, cold hearths, and phantom stairs,  
And the silence of dead feet—  
Locked wildly in one another's arms  
I saw two lovers meet.

And over that hearthless house aghast  
Rose from the mind's abyss  
Lost stars and ruined, peering moons,  
Worlds overshadowing this,—  
Time's stony palace crumbled down  
Before that instant kiss.

## XX

**W**HERE do you float from, visions that shine  
ere sleep  
Subdues with leaden law  
The dancing fires of the brain ?—In a shadowy land,  
As a king from a tower I saw.

There came startled gazelles, beautifully leaping,  
Delicate-hoofed : they were gone,  
And the red pomegranate showered its petalled bloom  
On the glittering stream alone.

I saw the dust on an Indian plain, and a grove  
Where pilgrims went in white :  
I saw the mountains, throned upon purple air,  
Remote in sculptured light.

And I saw the broadening beams of the early sun  
On the pale Pacific melt,  
And naked fishermen, idly rocked in a boat ;  
Their briny nets I smelt.

I saw amid Asian deserts a bed of reeds,  
And a heron slowly rose  
To the cloud from wild reeds blown by a wind that  
came  
From a land no man yet knows.

And I watched a tall ship gliding out of the mist  
By a snow-seamed iron cape.  
The smoky wraiths clung round her, but on she  
stemmed,  
Self-willed, a wing-bright shape.

Then all fell dark. Yet still in a trance elate,  
And strange to myself I lay.  
Here was the black, soft stillness : but where was I ?  
Far away, far away.

## XXI

### NUMBERS

**T**REFOIL and Quatrefoil !  
What shaped those destined small silent leaves  
Or numbered them under the soil ?  
I lift my dazzled sight  
From grass to sky,  
From humming and hot perfume  
To scorching, quivering light,—  
Empty blue !—Why,  
As I bury my face afresh  
In a sunshot vivid gloom—  
Minute infinity's mesh,  
Where spearing side by side  
Smooth stalk and furred uplift  
Their luminous green secrets from the grass,  
Tower to a bud and delicately divide—  
Do I think of the things unthought  
Before man was ?

Bodiless Numbers !  
When there was none to explore  
Your winding labyrinths occult,  
None to delve your ore  
Of strange virtue, or do  
Your magical business, you  
Were there, never old nor new,  
Veined in the world and alive :  
Before the planets, Seven ;  
Before these fingers, Five !

You that are globed and single,  
Crystal virgins, and you that part,

Melt, and again mingle !  
We have hoisted sail in the night  
On the oceans that you chart :  
Dark winds carry us onward, on ;  
But you are there before us, silent Answers,  
Beyond the bounds of the sun.  
You body yourselves in the stars, inscrutable dancers,  
Native where we are none.

O inhuman Numbers !  
All things change and glide,  
Corrupt and crumble, suffer wreck and decay,  
But, obstinate dark Integrities, you abide,  
And obey but them who obey.  
All things else are dyed  
In the colours of man's desire :  
But you no bribe nor prayer  
Availe to soften or sway.  
Nothing of me you share,  
Yet I cannot think you away.  
And if I seek to escape you, still you are there,  
Stronger than caging pillars of iron,  
Not to be passed, in an air  
Where human wish and word  
Fall like a frozen bird.

Music asleep  
In pulses of sound, in the waves !  
Hidden runes rubbed bright !  
Dizzy ladders of thought in the night !  
Are you masters or slaves—  
Subtlest of man's slaves—  
Shadowy Numbers ?

In a vision I saw  
Old vulture Time, feeding  
On the flesh of the world ; I saw  
The home of our use outdated—  
Seasons of fruiting and seeding  
Withered, and hunger and thirst  
Dead, with all they fed on :  
Till at last, when Time was sated,  
Only you persisted,  
Dædal Numbers, sole and same,  
Invisible skeleton frame  
Of the peopled earth we tread on—  
Last, as first.

Because naught can avail  
To wound or to tarnish you ;  
Because you are neither sold nor bought,  
Because you have not the power to fail  
But live beyond our furthest thought,  
Strange Numbers, of infinite clue,  
Beyond fear, beyond ruth,  
You strengthen also me  
To be in my own truth.

## XXII

### THE TWO DESIRES

**W**HAT is the spirit's desire,  
Sprung, springing, singing,  
Fountain-fresh, rainbowed over with lights that  
awaken  
The inner dishevelled crystal, starrily shaken  
To sevenfold changes of fire ?



Youth in its wonder aflower,  
Up to the sun swinging,  
A March daffodil, braves the bright wind's cold—  
Sensitive silken softness, yet how bold  
Against the cold snow-flurry and sleet shower !  
Because it seeks—what mark  
Beyond the tower of the lark  
Who sees the dawn from the dark ?  
Only itself to unfold,  
Expand, outpour, be told,  
All, all to utter,—  
Delicate thought's moth-flutter,  
And hope's proud-sweeping voyage of wings sky-  
reaping ;  
To soar and to explore  
In the midst of this mind-soiling  
Earth-medley, and flesh-toiling  
Cares, betrayal, and pain's returning sting ;  
Still to spring, still to sing,  
Flame and flower of the mind,  
Seeking bliss in this,—  
Itself, itself to find.

What is the spirit's desire ?  
—Comes Experience after,  
Experience and Comparison, mockers old.  
Trail of a tarnishing cloud is heavily rolled,  
And, harsher than shadow or cold,  
Pitiless light searches the shallows of laughter  
For terrible truth in the world rock-seated.  
Yet not because shadow-fearing or world-defeated  
But natively in its own unprompted sort,  
Because of desire profounder than desire,  
O now where aims the spirit ? Higher, higher

Than ever flight up-carried it ! Now that aim  
Is a greatness greater than hero's name and fame,  
A beauty passionate more than flesh can support,  
Divine greatness, divine beauty, a pain  
Appeasing all pains ; flying not blight or bruise,  
But seeking its own afar-conceived resort,  
The spirit is only fain  
Itself to lose,  
Lose, lose.

### XXIII

I N the high leaves of a walnut,  
On the very topmost boughs,  
A boy that climbed the branching bole  
His cradled limbs would house.

On the airy bed that rocked him  
Long, idle hours he'd lie  
Alone with white clouds sailing  
The warm blue of the sky.

I remember not what his dreams were ;  
But the scent of a leaf's enough  
To house me higher than those high boughs  
In a youth he knew not of,

In a light that no day brings now  
But none can spoil or smutch,  
A magic that I felt not then  
And only now I touch.



## XXIV

### COMMERCIAL

**G**ROSS, with protruding ears,  
Sleek hair, brisk glance, fleshy and yet alert,  
Red, full, and satisfied,  
Cased in obtuseness confident not to be hurt,

He sits at a little table  
In the crowded, congenial glare and noise, jingling  
Coins in his pocket ; sips  
His glass, with hard eye impudently singling

A woman here and there :—  
Women and men, they are all priced in his thought,  
All commodities staked  
In the market, sooner or later sold and bought.

“ Were I he,” you are thinking,  
You with the dreamer’s forehead and pure eyes,  
“ What should I lose ?—All,  
All that is worth the striving for, all my prize ;

“ All the truth of me, all  
Life that is wonder, pity and fear, requiring  
Utter joy, utter pain,  
From the heart that the infinite hurts with deep  
desiring.

“ Why is it I am not he ?  
Chance ? The grace of God ? The mystery’s plan ?  
He, too, is human stuff,  
A kneading of the old, brotherly slime of man.

“ Am I a lover of men,  
And turn abhorring as from fat slug or snake ?  
Lives obstinate in me too  
Something the power of angels could not unmake ? ”

O self-questioner ! None  
Unlocks your answer. Steadily look, nor flinch.  
This belongs to your kind,  
And knows its aim, and fails not itself at a pinch.

It is here in the world and works,  
Not done with yet.—Up, then, let the test be tried !  
Dare your uttermost, be  
Completely, and of your own, like him, be justified.

## XXV

### THE TAMARISK HEDGE

I KNOW that there are slumbrous woods beyond  
On islands of white marges, where the tide  
Floods upward, blue as a kingfisher's wing,  
And sails, like wishes of a reverie,  
Shine to the wind that fills them, far inland.  
I know that there are harbours in the hills  
Amid those verdurous, smooth bosom-folds,  
Found by the idle sunbeams for their sleep.  
But it contents me to see nothing more  
Than liquid blue of the invisible wind  
Flowing and glowing through the tamarisk  
That waves upon this wild deserted bank ;  
And I lie warm on the short, sandy, turf  
Lulled in bright noise of the returning sea.

O plummy Tamarisk, tossing your green hair  
In the wind's radiant stream, as if I had lent  
Your fibres all my senses of delight,  
Why does it so enchant me to have nothing,  
And drink long draughts of sky where nothing is,  
And tremble to the glory of an hour  
That passes out of nothing into nothing ?

## XXVI

**S**HABBY house-wall  
Of bricks once yellow,  
Dingied with city grime,  
Dusty and sallow,

The high sun, glorying  
In clear gold, edges  
Your crumbled mortar's  
Luminous ledges.

You glow with a touch  
From the pure sky.  
And suddenly all  
Is new to the eye.

I see you as labour's  
Rough fruit and homely,  
Raised morning by morning  
To an order comely ;

Labour of hands long dead,  
Living, when all's at rest,  
After the dark has come  
And the light gone West.

## XXVII

WHAT is lovelier than rain that lingers  
Falling through the western light ?  
The light that's red between my fingers  
Bathes infinite heaven's remotest height.

Whither will the cloud its darkness carry  
Whose trembling drops about me spill ?  
Two worlds, of shadow and splendour, marry :  
I stand between them rapt and still.

## XXVIII

DRINKING wide, sunny wind,  
Hand within hand,  
We look from hill to hill  
Of our own land.

Hand within hand, we remember  
Without speech,  
And hour upon hour comes about us ;  
We number them each.

O little far clouds that swim  
In the round of blue,  
Are you bringing those hours again,  
Shining in you ?

You melt into air, drop on earth,  
Sucked up in the light,  
And again you appear, in the blue  
You are born, you are bright,

As those hours live in us, nay beyond ;  
When we die, they shall still  
Lift our hearts up, as now we uplift  
Our hearts on the hill.

## XXIX

### THE HOUSE THAT WAS

OF the old house, only a few, crumbled  
Courses of brick, smothered in nettle and dock,  
Or a shaped stone lying mossy where it tumbled !  
Sprawling bramble and saucy thistle mock  
What once was fire-lit floor and private charm,  
Whence, seen in a windowed picture, were hills  
fading  
At night, and all was memory-coloured and warm,  
And voices talked, secure of the wind's invading.

Of the old garden, only a stray shining  
Of daffodil flames among April's cuckoo-flowers  
Or clustered aconite, mixt with weeds entwining !  
But, dark and lofty, a royal cedar towers  
By homelier thorns ; and whether the rain drifts  
Or sun scorches, he holds the downs in ken,  
The western vales ; his branchy tiers he lifts,  
Older than many a generation of men.

### XXX

**O**UT of first sleep as they awoke  
The moon had stolen upon her face.  
It seemed that they had opened eyes  
New on another world and place.

The eyes of each the other sought  
Wondering ; no sound was in the night.  
On them the very soul of peace  
Gazed in that spiritual light.

Beyond the reign of hurt and pain,  
Beyond the boundaries of death,  
Each seemed with their awaking sighs  
To breathe at last their native breath.

### XXXI

#### FLAME AND SNOW

**T**HE bare branches rose against the grey sky.  
Under them, freshly fallen, snow shone to the  
eye.

Up the hill-slope, over the brow it shone,  
Spreading an immaterial beauty to tread upon.

In the elbow of black boughs it clung, nested white,  
And smooth below it slept in the solitude of its light.

It was deep to the knee in the hollow ; there in a  
stump of wood  
I struck my bill-hook, warm to the fingers' blood, and  
stood,



Pausing, and breathed and listened: all the air  
around  
Was filled with busy strokes and ringing of clean  
sound,

And now and again a crack and a slow rending, to  
tell  
When a tree heavily tottered and swift with a crash  
fell.

I smelt the woody smell of smoke from the fire, now  
Beginning to spurt from frayed bracken and torn  
bough

In the lee of a drift, fed from our long morning toil  
And sending smart to the eyes the smoke in a blue  
coil.

I lopped the twigs from a fresh-cut pole and tossed it  
aside  
To the stakes heaped beyond me, and made a plung-  
ing stride,

And gathered twines of bramble and dead hazel sticks  
And a faggot of twisted thorn with snow lumped in  
the pricks,

And piled the smoulder high. Soon a blaze tore  
Up through hissing boughs and shrivelling leaves,  
from a core

Of quivering crimson; soon the heat burst and  
revelled,  
And apparitions of little airy flames dishevelled

Gleamed and vanished, a lost flight as of elfin wings,  
Trembling aloft to the wild music that Fire sings

Dancing alive from nothing, lovely and mad. And  
still

The snow, pale as a dream, slept on the old hill,

Softly fallen and strange. Which made me more to  
glow,

Beauty of young flames, or wonder of young snow ?

## XXXII

### COMPANIONS

**T**HE bread that's broken when we eat together  
Tastes sweet. A sunbeam stealing to your  
hand

Seems as if spilled from something brimming over

Within me, wanting no word, or itself

The word I wanted ! Find we not our own

Language in winds, fresh from a golden place,

When breasting the high down at last we turn

To each other, bright with rapturous escape,

And the hills sing together, like our hearts,

Lost in the light ! Between us, as we walk

Green roadsides, under homely hedgerow elms

Of summer leaf, silences are as water

Smooth for the sail and shining to the verge,

But intimate as a hand's touch when we pace

Long crowded pavements amber-lamped in dusk

That holds its dark breath over the gay talk,

Bright eyes, and grief buried in moving sound.

There is a secret colour that has dyed  
The world within our hearts : none knows it else,  
No more than that which thickens the flushed light  
Deep in the foxglove's honey-throat ; it is there  
In the midst of light speech and forgetfulness,  
In the empty house of absence, where the walls  
Echo other voices ; it is in the midst  
Of the unsaid fears the mind plots forts against,  
In the dragging thought and drizzle of blank care,  
The daily doing of what must be done ;  
Then suddenly it glows and bathes us like the sun.

### XXXIII

**W**E have planted a tree,  
And behold, it has flowers.  
How lovely their joy !  
Yet they know not of ours,

Who have shared in dull cares  
And the sharpness of pain  
Yet feel in our kisses  
The first kiss again,

And with hand clasped in hand  
We turn and we see  
The sweet laughing flowers  
On our own fair tree.

### XXXIV

**P**RIDE is the untrue mask,  
Shame is a cloak that clings,  
Tenderness oft is a trammelling veil  
Because of truth that stings.

O to be stript, and to use  
All one's soul entire !  
To be seen in the light, to be known for one's own,  
To abound in the beauty of desire !

As the young man casts his clothes,  
And, freed to the living air,  
Runs down the radiant ocean-sands  
With singing body bare.

### XXXV

**L**OSE me, full, full moment,  
Like a ripple round,  
Widening into worlds  
Beyond earth's bound.

I was walking a grey road  
Dulled to an old aim :  
Now I seek nothing,  
Now I have no name.

How came you to me,  
Opening timeless skies  
Like a heaven within me  
That is all sunrise ?

## XXXVI

SILENCES in the mind, the haunting Silences,  
Silences daunting,  
Chill as a cavern's air, immuring hollow gloom  
Yet inly luring  
Like springs that ooze there, glidings from the stone :  
What strange, dark tidings  
You brim with ! First, the doubted certainties,  
Then fancies routed  
By a spectral whisper from unstable worlds  
That turns to fable  
Accepted hope and fever of desires ;  
A whispered Never,  
Out of a vapour clothing from afar  
All things in Nothing.

## XXXVII

### THE THISTLE

I N a patch of baked earth  
At the crumbled cliff's brink,  
Where the parching of August  
Has cracked a long chink,

Against the blue void  
Of still sea and sky  
Stands single a thistle,  
Tall, tarnished, and dry.

Frayed leaves, spotted brown,  
Head hoary and torn,  
Was ever a weed  
Upon earth so forlorn,

So solemnly gazed on  
By the sun in his sheen  
That prints in long shadow  
Its raggedness lean ?

From the sky comes no laughter,  
From earth not a moan.  
Erect stands the thistle,  
Its seeds abroad blown.

### XXXVIII

**M**Y boat swings out and back,  
Moored among mint and rush.  
The river's ruffled speed  
Laughs in the white wind's track.  
My idle fingers crush  
A crinkled, scented reed.

Who needs his fate provoke ?  
A spirit in all things flows,  
And I with them flow too,  
Content to eye long boughs  
Of silvering willow stroke  
Slowly the summer blue.

### XXXIX

**T**HE long road lures across the hill,  
Divides the brown fields and the green,  
And curves, and dips, and climbing still  
Gleams over into lands unseen.

I think what valleys far more fair  
Than ours, the road runs on to meet.  
The light falls wild and happy there.  
What shadowy doubt delays my feet ?

Oh, one day, one day, I shall go  
Whither the road runs out of sight,  
And find, whatever winds may blow,  
An inn at falling of the night.

## XL

**R**OUND apples, burning upon the apple boughs,  
As the evening flush withdraws,  
Perfect and satiate, earth's completed vows,  
In a stillness nothing flaws,

You burn in the branching golden green, you float  
In humid blue immersed,  
Strange as if gleaming out of an air remote  
Where unknown tongues conversed.

Coloured and orbed by the hours, in motionless poise,  
You are timed, and rounded, and still :  
But in me is the want that springs, creates, destroys,  
The want no hours fulfil.

Stirred but a wing, stole but a tremor of light  
From the cloud, and my heart were aware  
That its will is to be with the spirit whose joy is  
flight ;  
I have tasted a timeless air.

Spiritual laughter promises all things free,  
The heart has a heaven to spend.  
Where the mind imagines its own, perfection to me  
Is a prison, a date, and an end.

XLI

**T**IME buys no wisdom like the eyes of youth,  
Though youth itself be blinded with delight,  
As a buoyant swimmer by the bursting spray  
Of the resplendent surge, and know not yet  
The marvel of its own heart's vision, blurred  
By lovely follies dancing in the sun.  
I heard a skylark scaling the spring air  
As slow I climbed the misty, rough hill-side.  
He poured the wordless wonder of his joy  
Into the empty sky : was never word  
Of human language held a joy so pure ;  
But it was I who knew it ! Though my feet  
Stayed on the plodded earth and in the mist,  
Yet I could breathe, float, mount and sing with him,  
The unwearable singer ; I could bathe  
In the beyond of blue, and know the round  
Of sea beneath me, and the sun above.  
He gave of what he knew not, soaring throat !



## XLII

### HOLIDAY

**T**HROUGH Ebblesborne and Broad-Chalke  
The narrow river runs,  
Dimples with dark November rains,  
Flashes in April suns.

But give me days of rosy June  
And on warm grass to lie  
And watch, bright over long green weed,  
Quick water wimple by.

Blue swallows, arrowing up and down,  
Cool trout that glide and dart,  
Lend me their happy bodies  
For the fancies of my heart.

But you, clear stream, that murmur  
One music all day long,  
I wish my idle fancy  
Sang half so sweet a song.

## XLIII

### ADVERSARIES

**W**HO are these that meet  
At random in the street?  
Adversaries! Yet they  
Make no sign nor stay.  
Neither he nor she

Knows what those Powers be  
That bodied in them go  
Among the peopled flow,  
One toward the dusk and one  
Toward the Western sun.

Secret eyes turn to her,  
And bosoms throb astir,  
As if a perfume blew  
And made the evening new.  
Lissom with budding breast,  
She steps toward the bright West,  
An airy-footed shape !  
Above the neck's young nape  
Springs wonderful her hair.  
The round throat lifts in air  
The flower that is her head.  
Her lips are Peril's red ;  
Her eyes a shy surprise,  
Shedding soft cruelties.

Of what will was she wrought,  
Vivid, without a thought ?  
Fragrance of all that's young  
And delicately sprung  
Is round her like a lure  
Voluptuously pure ;—  
Eternal soul of sense,  
The moment's quintessence !  
Of what will was she made,  
With those fine lashes laid  
Upon her bloom ? She comes  
From the wild Earth, that hums

With summer in the mead,  
Glutting the flower-cups' greed  
Of sunlight ; ill to tame  
As Hunger, Thirst, or Flame.

But he that's striding East  
Regards not her the least.  
His thought is far away,  
Circling the end of day.  
Though young, the restless mind,  
Moulding the flesh, has signed  
His features ; and his gaze,  
Absented in retreat  
From all this human street,  
Holds musings that begin  
To sharpen cheek and chin.  
What speculation now  
Beneath that ardent brow  
Braves what it sees ?—Among  
Blind worlds, this planet swung  
Like an old toy, a spark  
In the gigantic dark,  
A mote of dust alive,  
Where millions meanly strive—  
For what ?

    If Thought alone  
Keeps man upon his throne  
Of courage, to outface  
The Gorgon mask of Space,  
What wills it with this house  
Of flesh, that loves to drowse  
And take the hours of sense  
For sweetness and defence,—

Of flesh that is but clay  
For Thought to sift away  
Like powder of idle sand  
Within the crumbling hand ?

Two Cruelties are these,  
And two Defiances.  
Yet though they be apart  
As East and West, the heart  
Of man is twined in each.  
Of them he makes his speech,  
His torment and delight,  
His songs, his tears, his height  
Of wisdom, his despair.  
Though both his being tear,  
He knows not which to choose  
Nor which he'd harder lose.

## XLIV

### THE SEVEN ISLES

I DREAM of western waters, and of the Seven  
Isles,

And of mornings when they appear  
Flowering out of the mist on a sea of smiles,  
Warm and familiar and near.

Then O how changed ! fugitive, faint, remote ;  
In another world than ours,  
Vanishing apparitions, they seemed to float ;  
Shadows of shadowy powers.

Effaced, at last, as if they had never been !  
Drowned in the empty bay.  
On solitary water was nothing to be seen  
But a sail, pale on the grey.

And I wonder, O Isles, reappearing and lost without  
sign  
In the solitude of the seas,  
Are the songs of the Immortals more divine  
Or their magical silences ?

#### XLV

IF I could sing the song of her  
Who makes my heart to sing ;  
If I could catch the words to match  
Its secret blossoming ;

My song should be a heaven of sound  
Thrilled through a single note,—  
The world of light that's infinite  
In one flower's honey-throat !

A fountain diamonded in air,  
Earth-blessing dews at night,  
A dancing child, flames lovely-wild,  
Should not so much delight.

But where I most have theme to boast  
I stammer in my speech ;  
The full heart shames my faltering art  
With music past its reach.

## XLVI

### THE CATHEDRAL PORCH

**T**OWERING, towering up to the noon-blaze,  
Up to the hot blue, up to blinding gold,  
Pillar and pinnacle, arch and corbel, scrolled,  
Flowered and tendrilled, soar, aspire and raise  
The giant porch, with kings and prophets old  
High in their niches, like one shout of praise,  
From earth to heaven.—In shadow of the door  
Cringeing, a beggar stands ;  
He holds out abject hands ;  
His lips for pity and alms mechanically implore.

Splendour of air and the bright splintered beam  
Carve all afresh in strong reverberate glow  
As if even now the passionate master-blow  
Struck from the stone the shapes of beauty's dream.  
Can a mere hand ever have fashioned so  
Desire's adventure, god-like force, supreme  
Sky-scaling joy ?—The beggar's toneless drone  
Comes from his laughterless  
Accepted wretchedness  
As from a long-dried well, where off-cast clutter's  
thrown.

Prophet and saint and kingly king, whose eyes,  
Flashing authority, gaze and awe, you came  
From wombs of flesh, though now enthroned in  
fame.

A mother heard the helpless wailing cries  
Of voices that have won the world's acclaim  
By wisdom, suffering, truth. August you rise

Above this wreck, by whom the children run  
Careless with dancing limb,  
And laugh, and mock at him ;  
And beggar, children, towering porch are equal in  
the sun.

From the opened door bursts upon glorious wings  
Music : the shadowy silence moves with sound  
That overflows and rolls returning round.  
As if to itself, the pillared grandeur sings  
Of deeper than all thought has ever found,  
Of richer than the heart's imaginings.  
Of higher than all hope has dared to see.  
Like comment of a crow,  
Dulled, reiterate, slow,  
The human plaint croaks answer : Vanity ! look on  
me !

Who made the stark unfeatured quarry-block  
Live in those song-like pillars ? And who smote  
The ancient silence into note on note  
Melodious as the river from the rock ?  
Out of the heart of man such splendours float  
As make his vileness and his misery mock  
The prisoned soul : which shall bespeak him more  
Grandeur of stone and sound  
Or fawning abject, bound  
To his abasement, close as to a dungeon floor ?

Sunken eyes, craving hands, defeated shape,  
Whom to look on so humbles, you appear  
But as the avoided husk, shrivelled and sere,  
Cast by the spirit that springs up to escape  
To its own reality and radiance there  
For ever fresh as young bloom on a grape,

Triumphing to be human, yet to win  
An amplitude beyond  
Dull care and fancy fond,  
And breathe the light that man was born to glory in.

Yet littleness, and envy, and obscure pain  
Were mortised into that magnificence !  
Trading his wretchedness for pity's pence,  
Though this poor ruin from the depth complain,  
Slave to his self-lamenting impotence,  
Nor can his proud humanity regain ;  
O Wonder of Man, in his indignity,  
Forfeit, disgrace, and rue,  
Shares he not still in you ?  
Did not man sink so low, could he aspire so high ?

## XLVII

### UNSATED MEMORY

**E**MERGING from deep sleep my eyes unseal  
To a pursuing strangeness. O to be  
Where but a moment past I was, though where  
The place, the time I know not, only feel  
Far from this banished and so shrunken me,  
Struck conscious to the alien dawn's blank peer !

Between two worlds, homeless, I doubt of both,  
Knowing only that I seemed possessing realms  
And now have nothing. In this glimmering cave  
Of daylight, whither I return so loath,  
The emptiness of silence overwhelms ;—  
Still, vision-haunted, like the blind, I crave.



For splendour beats along my blood in gleams  
As of a skiey largeness closed and lost,  
That memory torments itself to clutch,  
Hungering unsated for that light of dreams  
Pursued down shadowy paths that foil, exhaust,  
And lose me in a cloud I cannot touch.

Fixed as in frost the motionless dim shape  
Of each accustomed thing about my bed  
Is like an enmity at watch for stale  
Habit to repossess me past escape.  
In the dead light all seems apart and dead,  
Yet menaces. The ticked hour is my jail.

Yet I had sense as of a forge whose blast  
Could fuse this stark world into glorious flow  
Of young power streaming irresistible,  
And I, dilated, roamed a region vast,  
Feasting in vision, with a soul aglow,  
And Time a steed to pace or race at will.

Where is that world that I am fallen from ?  
Look, as a sea-weed left at ebb to pine  
Hueless and shrunken, that had liberty  
To wander sparkle-fresh in its own foam,  
Trailing its rosy hair in the long brine,  
So am I cast up ; from what haunted sea ?

An ocean of the mind, without access  
Save in the labyrinths of sleep, a main  
Deep with the memory of all memories,  
Thoughts, and imaginations numberless  
That ever lodged in the brief-living brain,  
Washing our sun-lit ignorance : was it this ?

Then miserable I, that have but sucked  
Dull oozeings, vanished into vaporous dew,  
From springs that custom closes like a stone  
And leaden fear and clayey doubt obstruct.  
Heir of the earth's youth and of all it knew,  
What am I but a vessel charged with oblivion ?

Ah, surely I was rather native there  
Where all desires were lovely, and the power  
Of Time irrevocably creeping sure  
Was uncreated, than in this numb air  
Of mapped days and of hour pursuing hour,  
Endless impediment and forfeiture.

O we go shrouded from ourselves, and hide  
The soul from its own splendour, and encrust  
The virgin sense with thinking. Then some chance  
Moment reveals us : we are deified,  
Feeling and seeing ; gold gleams from the rust ;  
And, marvelling at our lost inheritance,

We breathe the air of beauty ; we regale  
The mind with innocence ; joy has no stint ;  
And we are chartered for the world's wide sea,  
Reason the rudder, not the sky-filled sail.—  
Still clings about us some imputing hint  
Of strangeness, even in self-captivity.

Before me comes a vision of the old, <sup>743</sup>  
With dear experience sunken in their eyes  
And furrowed on their faces ; scarce a spark  
Betrays the quick fire that once made them bold.  
All their strength's only for that enterprise  
Which takes them soon into the engulfing dark.

I think of old ships stranded, how they stir  
The mind to see their beauty in its decay.  
For they, unmemoried and mute, have been  
Companions of the wild winds without fear,  
And carried far adventure, who shall say  
Into what glories we have never seen ?

### XLVIII

#### THE WOOD'S ENTRY

**S**O old is the wood, so old,  
Old as Fear.  
Wrinkled roots ; great stems ; hushed leaves ;  
No sound near.

Shadows retreat into shadow,  
Deepening, crossed.  
Burning light singles a low leaf, a bough,  
Far within, lost.

### XLIX

#### GOBLINS

**T**HE night is holy and haunted,  
Asleep in a vale of June.  
Stillness and earth-smell mingle  
With the beams' unearthly boon.—  
Yet a terror is fallen upon me  
From the other side of the moon.

If it be Truth that's hidden  
Upon that other side,  
Unseen, unguessed of any,  
Waiting to be descried? . . .  
Without shadow or footstep,  
Goblins by me glide.

The mellow moon, entrancing  
An English meadow here,  
Silers the old farm roofs below  
And dewy grasses near.  
But the world her far side faces?  
I think of it, and fear.

If not man's ancient terror,  
Bribed with long sacrifice,  
If not old ignorance, whose hope  
Would truth to itself entice—  
If REASON be the goblin  
That thrills my blood to ice?

The bean-blossom is breathing  
From fields in glimmer spread;  
A rose hangs dim on the amber air . . .  
But I am lured and led  
To an outer vast apartness  
Beyond man's hope or dread.

I look down upon me and mine  
As with translated eyes,  
My struggle in rapture and anguish  
But noted like a fly's,  
My world at stake, my heaven and hell  
Small as a beetle's prize.

Busy in deep-sea dungeons,  
Great mouths of fishes blind ;  
Blind wheel of planet on planet  
In gulfs no thought can find ;  
The proud black stare of a falcon,  
Without a thought behind,

Possess me, dispossess me :  
They mock me not, they are.  
The worlds are all a web that's hung  
Beyond conception far,  
That a gorged and hairy spider  
Spins in the central star.

Ferocity of begetting ;  
Prowling hunger's maw,  
Fury of teeth and hot-spilt blood,  
Cold pounce and tearing claw,  
Laughterless lust, the swarm and spawn  
That one another gnaw ;

A race to death, a frenzy  
Rushing into the night,  
A rage of life, a riot,  
Seen in a moment's light,  
And Death the wild pursuer  
Close on that fever-flight !

I see it all in vision,  
I see with murdered sense  
Of neither good nor evil,  
Nor make a fool's pretence.  
I share, I too, that hunted  
And horrible innocence.

Cruelty's matched with courage.  
Not that a power should thrive  
Which twists its poison-tendrils  
In all that is alive ;  
Nor that with those fell doings  
My fate be to connive ;

Not this the ulterior terror  
That has the goblin grin,  
But that the ignorant stare of space  
Be the end as the origin,—  
This glorious palace of the mind  
A cave that tumbles in,  
And reason mocked by reason  
Be all the goal to win.

## L

### INITIATION

**T**HE wind has fal'n asleep ; the bough that tost  
Is quiet ; the warm sun's gone ; the wide light  
Sinks and is almost lost ;  
Yet the April day glows on within my mind  
Happy as the white buds in the blue air,  
A thousand buds that shone on waves of wind.  
Now evening leads me wooingly apart.  
The young wood draws me down these shelving ways  
Deeper, as if it drew me to its heart.

What stills my spirit ? What awaits me here ?  
So motionless the budded hazels spring,  
So shadowy and so near !

My feet make not a sound upon this moss,—  
Greenest gloom, scented with cold primroses.  
A ripple, shy as almost to be mute,  
Secretly wanders among further trees ;  
Else the clear evening brims with loneliness,  
With stillness luminous and absolute.

The pause between sunset and moonrise  
Exhales a strangeness. It melts out in dream  
The experience of the wise.  
This purity of sharpened sweet spring smells  
Comes like a memory lost since I was born.  
My own heart changes into mystery !  
There is some presence nears through all these  
    spells  
Out of the darkened bosom of the earth :  
Not I the leaf, but the leaf touches me.

Who seeks me ? What shy lover, whose approach  
Makes spiritual the white flowers on the thorn ?  
Who seems to breathe up round me,—perfume  
    strange !—

June and its bloom unborn ?  
Shy as a virgin passion is the spring !  
I could have Time cease now, so there should live  
This blossom in the stillness of my heart,—  
Earth's earth, yet immaterial as a sense  
Enriched to understand, love, hope, forgive.

Now, now, if ever, could the spirit catch,  
Beyond the ear's range, thrills of airy sound.  
I tremble, as at the lifting of a latch.  
Am I not found ?

This magical clear moment in the dusk  
Is like a crystal dewy-brimming bowl  
Imperilled upon lifting hands : I dread  
The breathing of the shadow that shall spill  
This wonder, and with it my very soul.

A dead bough cracks under my foot. The charm  
Breaks ; I am I now, in a gloom aware  
Of furtive, flitting wing, and hunted eyes,  
And furry feet a-scare.  
Fear, it is fear exiles us each apart ;  
We are all bound and prisoned in our fear ;  
From the dark shadow of our own selves we flee.  
Ah, but that moment, open-eyed, erect,  
I had stepped out of all fear, and was free.

How sweet it was in youth's shy giving-time  
Finding the sudden friend, whose thoughts ran out  
With yours in natural chime ;  
Who knew, before speech, what the lips would tell !  
No need to excuse, to hide or to defend  
From him, in whom your dearest thought shone new  
And not a fancy stirred for him in vain.  
So was it, as with a so perfect friend,  
In that rare moment I have lost again.

But lo, a whiteness risen beyond the hill :  
The moon-dawn ! A late bird sings somewhere ; hark  
The long, low, loitering trill !  
Like water-drops it falls into the dark.  
The earth-sweetness holds me in its fragrant mesh.  
Oh, though I know that I am bound afar,  
Yet, where the grass is, there I also grew.  
Blood knows more than the brain. Am I perhaps  
Most true to earth when I seem most untrue ?



## THE CHILDREN DANCING

**A**WAY, sad thoughts, and teasing  
 Perplexities, away !  
 Let other blood go freezing,  
 We will be wise and gay.  
 For here is all heart-easing,  
 An ecstasy at play.

The children dancing, dancing,  
 Light upon happy feet,  
 Both eye and heart entrancing  
 Mingle, escape, and meet ;  
 Come joyous-eyed advancing  
 Or floatingly retreat.

Now slow, now swifter treading  
 Their paces timed and true,  
 An instant poised, then threading  
 A maze of printless clue,  
 Their motions smoothly wedding  
 To melody anew,

They sway in chime, and scatter  
 In looping circles ; they  
 Are Music's airy matter,  
 And their feet move, the way  
 The raindrops shine and patter  
 On tossing flowers in May.

As if those flowers were singing  
 For joy of the clean air,  
 As if you saw them springing  
 To dance the breeze, so fair

The lissom bodies swinging,  
So light the flung-back hair.

And through the mind enchanted  
A happy river goes  
By its own young carol haunted  
And bringing where it flows  
What all the world has wanted  
And who in this world knows ?

## LII

### THE WHARF ON THAMES-SIDE : WINTER DAWN

**D**AY begins ; cold and misty on soiled snow  
That frost has ridged and crusted. Sound of steps  
Comes, then a shape emerges from the mist  
Without haste, trudging tracks the feet know well,  
With his breath white upon the air before him,  
To old work. Over the river hangs a crane  
At the wharf's edge. Scarved, wheezing, buttoned up,  
The stubble-bearded crane-man eyes the tide  
Ruckling against moored barges under the bridge,  
Considers the blank moon, the obstinate frost,  
Swings arms and beats them on his breast for warmth,  
And to his engine-cabin disappears.  
Full, fast, impetuous the tide floods up Thames,  
And the solitary morning steals abroad  
Over a million roofs, intensely still  
And distant in a dark sleep.

For whose joy  
Was it, the February moon all night  
Beamed silence, like the healing of all noise,

And beauty, like compassion, upon mean  
Litter of energy and trading toil,—  
Cinder-heaps, sacks, tarpaulins, and stale straw ;  
Empty and full trucks ; rails ; and rows of carts,  
Shafts tilted backwards ; musty railway-arch,  
Dingy brick wall, huddled slate roofs ? It shone  
On the clean snow and the fouled ; touches of light  
Mysterious as a dreamer's smile ! For whom  
Rose before dawn the spiritual pale mist,  
When imperceptibly the hue of the air  
Was altered, and the dwindled beamless moon  
Looked like an exiled ghost ; till opposite  
The vapour flushed to airy rose, and dawn  
Made the first long faint shadows ?

Now the smoke  
Begins to go up from those chimnied roofs  
Across the water. Trains with hissing speed  
And frosty flashes cross the shaken bridge,  
Filled each with faces, eager and uneager,  
Tired and fresh, young and old ; bound for the desk,  
The stool, the counter—threads in the roaring loom  
Of London. What thoughts have they in their eyes  
That idly fall on the familiar river  
This passive moment before toil usurps  
Hand and brain ? Each a separate-remembered world  
Of scheme and fancy, of dreads and urgent hopes,  
Hungers and solaces ! But which keeps not  
A private corner deep in heart or mind  
Where dwells what no one else knows ? And they pass  
Nameless, in thousands, with their mysteries, by us.

Slowly the city is waking in all its streets,  
But dark, impetuous, silent, full, up Thames  
The tide comes, like a lover to his own ;

Comes like a lover, as if it sought to pour  
Secrets to its listener, of vast night, and the old  
Bright moon-lit oceans ; of wild breaths of brine ;  
Of tall ships that it swung to an anchorage  
In the misty dawn, and wanderers far away  
On the outer seas among adventurous isles  
Whose names are homely here. As if the blood  
Of this our race poured back upon its heart,  
Drawn by that moon of pale farewell, it comes  
Brimming and buoyant, with an eager ripple  
Against the black-stemmed barges, and swift swirl  
Of sucking eddies by stone piers, and sound  
Like laughter along the grimed wall of the wharf.

A great horse, tugging at a truck, stamps hoofs  
Upon the frozen ground. A man beside him  
Shouts or is silent. Labourers here and there  
Deliberately, in habit's motion, take  
Each his work : from the barges lighter-men  
Call, and the crane moves, rattling in its iron.  
It is plain day.

Still the up-streaming tide  
Pours its swift secret, and the fading moon  
Lingers aloft. But now the wakened wharf,  
Stirred from its numbness, the bright rails, the trucks  
With snow upon them, and the hoisting crane,  
Are touched with all the difference of mankind ;  
And the river whispering out of the travelled seas  
Of foreign ships and countries, comes to them  
With a familiar usage ; each appears  
As a faculty of the morning, that begins  
Once more the inter-threaded toil of men.

## THE DREAM HOUSE

**O**FTEN we talk of the house that we will build  
For airier and less jostled days than these  
We chafe in, and send Fancy roaming wide  
Down western valleys with a choosing eye  
To hover upon this nook or on that,  
And let the mind, like fingers pressing clay,  
Shape and reshape the mould of an old desire,  
Spur jogging Time, conjure slow years to days,  
Until tall trees, like those far fabled walls,  
Rise visibly to the mind's music. Here  
We scoop a terrace under hanging woods  
Upon the generous slope of a green hill  
That gazes over alluring distances ;  
Listen to our merry children at their play,  
And see the shadow lengthen from our roof  
On plots of garden. Fancy, busy still,  
Sows colours for the seasons in those plots,  
And matches or contrasts the chosen leaves  
That are to shade our saunters ; the clean boughs  
Of aromatic walnut ; the wild crab  
With, after snows of blossom, fiery fruit ;  
And beeches of a grander race beyond them  
Withdrawing into uninvaded wood ;  
But, farther down, our orchard falls to where  
The stream makes a live murmur all day long.  
Man is a builder born : not for the shell  
That makes him armour against stripping wind  
And frost and darkness ; for befriending roof  
And walls to sally from, a bread-getter.  
No, but as out of mere unmeaning sound  
And the wild silence he has made himself

Marvellous words and the order of sweet speech,  
Breathing and singing syllables, that move  
Out of the caverns of his heart like waves  
Into the world beyond discovery ; so  
Builds he, projecting memory and strong hope  
And dear and dark experience into stone  
And the warm earth he digs in and reshapes,  
Dyeing them human, and with a subtle touch  
Discovering far kinships in the sky  
And the altering season, till the very cloud  
Brings its own shadow as to familiar haunts,  
And the sun rests as on a place it sought.  
Earth also as with a soft step unperceived  
Draws from her ancient silence nearer him,  
Sending wild birds to nest beneath his eaves  
Or to shake songs about him as he walks,—  
Shy friends, the airy playmates of his joy.  
Cæsars may hoist their towers and heave their walls  
Into a stark magnificence, impose  
The aggrandised image of themselves, as trumpets  
Shattering stillness. We'll not envy them,  
While there's a garden to companion us  
And earth to meet us with her gentle moss  
Upon our own walls. They may entertain  
Prodigally a thousand guests unpleased ;  
But we have always one guest that is ever  
Lovely and gracious and acceptable,  
Light.

As I lay upon a hill-top's turf  
I watched the wide light filling the round air  
And I was filled with its felicity.  
O the carriage of the light among the corn  
When the glory of the wind dishevels it !  
How it filters into the dim domes of trees

Spilt down their green height, shadows dropping gold !  
How beautiful its way upon the hills  
At morning and at evening, when the blades  
Of grass blow luminous, every little blade !  
How the flowers drink it, happy to the roots !  
This lovely guest is ours to lodge ; and we  
Will build for it escapes and entrances  
And corners to waylay the early beam  
And keep its last of lingering : here to accept  
Its royalty of fullness ; there to catch  
In dusky cool one lustre on the floor  
Doubling itself in echoed radiances  
Mellow as an old golden wine, on wall  
And ceiling : oh, how gentle a touch it has  
On choice books, and smooth-burnished wood, in such  
Human captivity ! When the winds roar over,  
What sudden splendours toss into our peace  
With reappearing victories ! O the glory  
Of morning through a doorway on the hair,  
Neck, arms, young movements of a laughing child !  
O mystery of brightness when we wake  
In the night-hush and see upon the blind  
The trembling of the shadow of a tree  
Kissed by the moon, that from the buried light  
Wooes ghostliness of beauty, and receives  
And whispers it to all the world asleep.

Whatever it be made of, this dreamed home  
Upon a hill, I know not in what vale,  
Shall be a little palace for the light  
To stray and sleep in and be blest for it.  
So thought I : then I thought, O my dear Love,  
Surely I am that house, and you the light.

## WESTWARD

I FOUND my Love among the fern. She slept.  
 I My shadow stole across her, as I stept  
 More lightly and slowly, seeing her pillowed so  
 In the short-turfed and shelving green hollow  
 Upon a cushion of wild thyme, amid  
 Tall bracken-tufts that, roughly luminous, hid  
 Her hair in amber shadow. Then I stopped.  
 The light was in the West : the wind had dropped ;  
 A burning fragrance breathed out of the ground,  
 And the sea-murmur rose remote around.  
 But my Love slept. My very heart was singing  
 With the sweet swarm of winged thoughts it was  
 bringing :  
 And she lay there, with the just heaving breast,  
 So still. As a lark drops down to its nest,  
 I sank beside her, waiting for those eyes  
 To complete earth with light that nowhere lies  
 But in their depths for me, and carry home  
 The flight of my full spirit.

I had come  
 From wandering wide beaches far beneath  
 This airy height of summer-scented heath.  
 I was alone, and the shore solitary,  
 And the sea glittered infinite and starry  
 As on the sands I paced, that dazzling wet  
 Shone round, until the tumbled rocks they met  
 At the gaunt cliff's root ; silvery runnels, fed  
 From oozy levels draining to their bed,  
 Wound flashing between smoothly furrowed slabs  
 Which the sky coloured ; there the youngling  
 crabs



Had scrawled a trail, and weeds, dull-rose and  
green,

Lay by their shadows, where old foam had been,  
Crusted with shells. A mist of finest spray  
Blew from the western glory, and in the bay  
The ever-streaming surges gleamed and roared  
Like a rejoicing Power for ever poured  
For the mere splendour of its motion : salt  
The air came to the nostril ; and the vault  
Of heaven had burnt its colours into one  
Unfathomable clearness, that the sun  
Was soul of, as it journeyed down the West  
And in the leaping waters made each crest  
A moment of live fire. I breathed the immense  
And shining silence. It was to my sense  
Like youth, that's all horizon, and misgives  
Nothing, and in the unbounded moment lives,  
And names not hope yet among things endured  
And unamended, being so assured  
Of its desire and the long day, and so  
Ignorant of that swift Night, saying No.

Ah, why should peace and liberty most bring  
Into the heart that loves them most the sting  
Of Time's oppression, and the thwarting thorns,  
The loss, the want, the many clouded morns ?  
O for deliverance ! To untwist the bond  
Of circumstance ; to breathe the blest Beyond  
Where we would be ; to incarnate clean and true  
All we were born and dedicated to !  
O Love, how often have we shared that sigh !  
To me beside that boundless sea and sky  
Intolerably came my briefness ; all  
The undone things. Why into hearts so small

Were crammed these hungering immensities,  
Thrust each day back to a prison that denies  
Their native satisfaction ?

I cast me down

On a great slope of rock that, ribbed and brown,  
Was cloven at the top ; and in between  
The hollowed ledges I could lightly lean  
And see the deep cup of a pool ; it held  
Its limpid leaving of the surge that swelled,  
A tide since, over that sea-buried reef.  
A round pool, deeply clear beyond belief,  
Rough with minute white shells about its rim,  
Its crystal in the shadow gleamed how dim  
And small ! while in my eye the homeless main,  
Its brine was of, a splendid restless plain  
Of water, spread a path for any keel  
To take, the round world over, and to feel  
Pressures of every wind, and haven far  
Where it should choose, mirroring mast and spar  
In sultry smooth lagoon, or under pines  
Snow-plumed on iron fiord, or where lines  
Of ships at a famed port with traffic hum  
And chimes of foreign bells to sailors come,  
And strange towers over crowded wharfs look high.  
—Ah ! such a drop of casual life was I,  
At evening left : my simple, scanted, raw  
Experience but the sipping of a straw  
Snatched from me soon ! I lifted up my gaze  
Into the west and the spray-misted blaze  
Where the sun gloried, and his glittering track  
Allured me on and on.

Then I looked back.

All was changed. Something had transfigured each  
Of those hard cliffs that thrust into the beach

Their bouldered ramparts. Every narrow seam  
Brimmed with the opposite light, and the warm gleam  
Found out small clusters of sea-pink, and many  
A samphire-tuft in its uneven cranny,  
And bloomed a burning orange on the stain  
Of lichen, and dissembled rosy grain  
On the rock's blackness. At the summit showed  
A gemmy green, where the grass patches glowed  
Between those jutting crags. The air was hush ;  
And the shore quivered with a phantom flush  
Of molten colours on far-shining sand.  
All was as warm to sight as to the hand,  
Distinct yet insubstantial, as if what  
The eye saw had been created by a thought  
Intenser than its vision. Memory played  
A music in the mind, and Time delayed  
To whisper names forgotten. I saw no more  
The sculpture of those rocks, that vivid shore ;  
But far-off hours arose before me there  
Beautiful in a bright unearthly air.  
Memory touched her stops, and one by one  
They came, each with its own shadow and sun  
And its peculiar perfume : each a part  
Of the quick blood and pulsing of my heart.  
I carried riches ; I was as a king,  
Clothed in a more than royal apparelling,  
Because of glories in the mind, and light  
In eyes I knew, and the unended flight  
Of thought, and friendship warmer than the sun,  
And dateless joy, and hope shared, and things done  
With all the soul's strength, and still precious pain.

Youth, O sweet, careless Youth, flooding the vein  
With easy blood, what time the body knows

Scarce that it is, so brimmingly life glows  
Within it, and its motions are like words  
Born happy on the lips, and like the birds  
On April-blossomed boughs rich fancies throng  
The mind's exuberance and spill in song,  
I think my heart back into all the bloom  
And feel it fresh. As one that enters home,  
I am there : the shyness, and the secret flame  
Of ecstasy that knew not any name,  
The wild heart-eating fevers, the young tears,  
The absorbed soul, the trouble, and the fears  
Wide as the night, the joy without a thought  
Meeting the morning,—Time has never taught  
My heart to lose them. Still I smell that rose  
Of so inscrutable sweetness ; and still glows  
The glory of the wonder when I first  
Heard the enchanted poets, and they burst  
In song upon my spirit, as if before  
No one had ever passed that magic door,  
But for me, first in all the world, they sang.  
Sweetest of all things, Youth, sweet in the pang  
As in the pleasure, you are in me yet,  
Changed as the grape to wine : could I forget,  
Then were this hand dust. In those yesterdays  
Memory happy and familiar strays,  
Exploring hours that, long in shadow lain,  
Come effortlessly all distinct again,  
As in my light boat I would track the banks  
Of narrow streams that rippled past the ranks  
Of yellow-flowered reeds, and knew not where  
They led me, for no human sound was there,  
But the shy wings were near me, and I to  
them,  
And the wild earth was round me as in a dream

And I was melted into it. I can hear,  
Lost in the green, bright silence, where I  
steer

Beneath gold shadows wavering on my arm  
The water saying over its low charm  
Among the reeds, and, dreading to disturb  
The mirror of the blossomed willow-herb,  
Drink it into my heart. O idle hours,  
Floating with motion like the summer towers  
Of cloud in the blue noon, I have not drained  
Your fullness yet, for all that care has rained  
Upon defeated days of dark sundown,  
Like burial of all beauty and all renown,  
When the spirit sits within its fortalice  
And watches mute.

One simple, passionate kiss  
Can alter earth for ever. Out of what  
Imagination, or what far forethought  
Of Time, came Love in beauty new and strange  
With eyes of light, my earth and sky to change  
And bring me vision of a promised land,  
As if long-sunken centuries had planned  
The meeting of our lips? From far we came  
To one another, ere we had a name.  
Wonderful shape, white ecstasy, the cup  
That God with living wine has so filled up!  
O body made like music, like a word  
Syllabled in spontaneous accord;  
Quick-sensed with apprehension; capable  
Of extreme joy, of pangs far-piercing; full  
Of divine wants, like a wave moving through  
The passionate and transparent soul of you;  
O mystery and power, charged with unknown  
Futurities; a lovely flame that's blown

In the wind of life, and sister'd to all fire  
That has in it the peril of all desire ;  
Dearer than breath, what are you made of, whence  
Come you ? I know not ; the eluded sense  
Only replies, " To name her is to tell  
The very name of Love." It is to spell  
A language more profound than tongue can use,  
Written in the heart's blood of the world ; to lose  
All that is worth the losing, and to trust  
In spite of withered leaf and charnel dust.

Who knows his own beginning ? Hour from hour  
Is born ; in secret buds, and breaks to flower  
Within us. Nothing we have ever been,  
Nothing we have endured, nothing we have seen,—  
Ay, and before we came into this light,  
Were sacrificial hopes, and exquisite  
Fears, and the jealous patience of the womb,  
And throes of self-consuming martyrdom,  
Imprinted on the fibre of our flesh,—  
Nothing is ended, but is made afresh  
Into a subtler potency ; the eyes  
See a more wondrous earth, the senses prize  
More, its more pregnant meaning ; and we go  
To enrich a world beyond us, overflow  
Into a mind of what thoughts who can tell ?

O Love, we draw from an unfathomed well.  
Where are the June nights that made heaven a whole  
Blue jewel, throbbing through the very soul ?  
Where is the dizzying bloom and the perfume—  
Earth-ecstasy, sighed up to starry gloom,  
That in the touching lips' ineffable  
Communion, was a spirit and a spell,

As if we had found within ourselves a being  
More infinite than any shown to seeing ?  
Where is the beauty that stole thought away  
And moved to tears some one remembered day ?  
Where is the laughter some sweet chance would  
start,

To leave its summer warmth about the heart ?  
Where are the places we shall see no more ?  
Are they not powers to haunt us at the core  
Of feeling, and evoke the eternal Now,  
Like music, out of nothing ? Nay, I vow,  
Most perishable, most immortal tastes ;  
And the frail flame, that touches us and hastes  
Into the dark, endures more than the build  
Of proudest fortress. We are found and filled ;  
And it suffices. For we pass among  
Grandeurs, and from a grandeur we are sprung,  
Marvellous in our destiny, and know  
Man is most man meeting a giant foe,  
Whether overcoming or defeated. We,  
Who hear, like moving rumour of the sea  
And march of ocean waves, the human sound  
About us, filled with meaning more profound ;  
Who know what hearts beat by us, and have  
shared

In all the mighty martyr names have dared ;  
Who feel all earth beneath the stars, the race  
Of rivers, and the mountains in their place,  
Faculties of our being ; and have a mind  
Dyed in the ardent story of our kind ;  
We in our briefness, in our storm and ache,  
Our loves magnificent in hearts that break,  
We, all our bonds and bounds exceeding, ay,  
Burning a loftier flame because we die,

We at Time's outpost, we the thrust spear-head  
Against the opposing darkness of the dead,  
We are the world's adventure ! We speed on,  
Stay not, but westward travel with the sun,  
Westward into the splendour that takes all,  
And carry far into the great light's fall  
That infinite memory of the world we bear  
Within our spirits, burning and aware.

Wake, Love, awake !—Her eyes shone into mine  
That moment. In the air was light divine,  
Sinking and yet suspended still, to hold  
Rocks, ocean, heaven, within one bath of gold.  
But in the soul that met me from those eyes,  
Impassioning the beauty of the skies,  
Was my completion. Earth, as newly made,  
Ev'n to the smallest shape of green grass-blade,  
Lived ; and the thrilled, bright silence sang to me ;  
For in the hush I heard the boundless sea.

## LV

### FROM THE CHINESE

A FLOWER, or the ghost of a flower !  
Mist, or the soul of it, felt  
In the secret night's mid hour,  
Lost on the morning air !  
Who shall recover it,—beauty born to melt  
As the apparition of blossom brief and shy,  
As the cloud in the sky that vanishes, who knows  
where ?



## LVI

### THE COCKATOO : FROM THE CHINESE

**A** PRESENT from tropical Annam,  
A bird with a human speech,  
A gloriously plumed cockatoo  
Rosy as the flower of a peach !  
And they did what they also do  
To the learned, the witty, the sage ;—  
Got a cage with the stoutest of bars  
And shut it up fast in the cage.

## LVII

### FROM GOETHE

**P**EACE is perfect over  
All the hills.  
Scarce wilt thou discover  
A breath, so still's  
Every tree.  
The woods are silent ; birds have hushed their song.  
Wait but thou ; ere long  
Peace comes to thee.

## LVIII

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CALDERON

WISDOM and Valour, Faith,  
Justice,—the lofty names  
Of virtue's quest and prize,—  
What is each but a cold wraith  
Until it lives in a man  
And looks thro' a man's eyes ?

On Chivalry as I muse,  
The spirit so high and clear  
It cannot soil with aught  
It meets of foul misuse ;  
It turns wherever burns  
The flame of a brave thought ;

And wheresoever the moan  
Of the helpless and betrayed  
Calls, from near or far,  
It replies as to its own  
Need, and is armed and goes  
Straight to its sure pole-star ;—

No legendary knight  
Renowned in an ancient cause  
I warm my thought upon.  
There comes to the mind's sight  
One whom I knew, whose hand  
Grasped mine : George Calderon.

Him now as of old I see  
Carrying his head with an air  
Courteous and virile,

With the charm of a nature free,  
Daring, resourceful, prompt,  
In his frank and witty smile.

By Oxford towers and streams  
Who shone among us all  
In body and brain so bold ?  
Who shaped so firm his themes  
Crystal-hard in debate ?  
And who hid a heart less cold ?

Lover of strange tongues,  
Whether in snowy Russia,  
Or tropic island bowers  
Listening to the songs  
Of the soft-eyed islanders,  
Crowned with Tahitian flowers,

A maker of friends he went.  
Yet who divined him wholly  
Or his secret chivalries ?—  
Was all that accomplishment,  
Wit, alertness, grace,  
But a kind of blithe disguise ?

Restless in curious thought  
And subtle exploring mind,  
He mixt his modern vein  
With a strain remotely brought  
From an older blood than ours,  
Proud loyalties of Spain.

Was it the soul of a sword ?  
For a bright sword leapt from sheath  
Upon that August day

When war's full thunder stored  
Over Europe, suddenly crashed,  
And a choice upon each man lay.

Others had left their youth  
In the taming years ; and some  
Doubted ; some made moan.  
To meet the peril of truth  
With aught but a gay courage  
Was not for Calderon.

Wounded from France he came.  
His spirit halted not ;  
In that long battle afar,  
Fruitless in all but fame,  
Athos and Ida saw  
Where sank his gallant star.

O well could I set my mood  
To a mournful falling measure  
For a friend dear and dead ;  
And well could memory brood  
Singing of youth's delight  
And lost adventure fled.

But that so fearless friend  
With his victorious smile  
My mourning mood has chid.  
He went to the very end ;  
He counted not the cost ;  
What he believed, he did.

## LIX

### WINGLESS VICTORY

#### I

**V**ICTORY! Was that proud word once so  
dear?  
Are difficulty, patience, effort hard  
As danger's edge, disputing yard by yard  
The adversary without and the mind's fear,  
Are these our only angels? friends austere  
That find our hidden greatness out, and guard  
From the weak hour's betrayal faith unmarred!  
For look! how we seem fall'n from what we  
were.

Worms feed upon the bodies of the brave  
Who bled for us: but we bewildered see  
Viler worms gnaw the things they died to save.  
Old clouds of doubt and weariness oppress.  
Happy the dead, we cry, not now to be  
In the day of this dissolving littleness!

#### II

O you dear Dead, pardon! For not resigned,  
We see, though humbled, half our purpose bent  
And our hope blurred, like men in banishment.  
Giants amid a blank mist groping blind,  
The nations ache. And old greeds unconfined  
Possess men, sick at battle's blood hot-spent  
Yet sleek and busy and righteously content  
To wage war, safe and secret, on their kind.

If all were simple as the way of hate !  
But we must reap where others sowed the seed  
In time long past, of folly and pride and greed ;  
Confused with names, idols, and politics ;  
Though over all earth, where we think a State,  
There are but men and women ; only these.

### III

Victory, winged, has flown far off again.  
She is in the soul, she travels with the light.  
We see her on the distant mountain height  
Desired, but she has left us in the plain,  
Left us awhile, to chafe and to complain,  
Yet keep our wills, in this dark time's despite,  
Like those that went up to the horrible fight  
Beneath their burdens, plodding in the rain.

Courage ! The same stuff that so greatly bore  
And greatly did, is here, for gods to find,  
And the dear human cause in the heart's core.  
Be the task always harder than we know,  
And victory further, yet in pain we grow.  
The vision is before us, not behind.

### LX

#### A DAFFODIL

PURE-THROATED Flower,  
Smelling of Spring,  
Shaped beyond art's  
Imagining ;

Fathomless colour,  
Breathed as an ether  
Of flame and of stillness  
Melted together ;

Soul of the sun's beam  
Changed to fairy  
Flesh, so delicate,  
Poised and airy !

I think of my own kind,  
Hardly winning  
A thousand battles  
For joy's beginning ;

Victory bloody  
And with evil shared,  
Splendour soiled  
And greatness snared ;

Truth conceded  
Or won by halves,  
Pitiful sores  
And sorrier salves ;

Blind authority  
Treading like oxen's heels  
All that sees clearest,  
All that most feels.

But you are absolute  
(Follow who can !)  
As a commandment  
Of God to man.

Straight you spring  
And whole you spend,  
And fall upon fruitful earth,  
Clean to the end.

O to be pure  
As a single sense,  
Keen as scorn,  
As love intense,

To live in the light,  
And to die in a deed  
That is faith's Amen  
And has sown its seed !

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### NOTE

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**PORPHYRION**

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**LONDON VISIONS**

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**THE FOUR YEARS**

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